



THE QUAIL

Mt. Diablo Audubon Society | www.diabloaudubon.org

8 pm: Why Bats Matter

"Why should I care about bats?" you might ask yourself. Bats make up between one fifth and one quarter of all mammal species, with the highest estimates at more than 1,300 species of bats. These airborne mammals live on all continents except Antarctica and appear in astonishing variety. The smallest, known as "bumblebee bats," can weigh less than a penny, while the largest, flying foxes, have wingspans stretching to as much as 6 feet.

We know our local bats are experts at eating insects. Bats in other habitats are vital pollinators of many plants and the most important "foresters" in tropical regions, reseeding the forest as they fly. They eat things you'd never dream they could: fish, frogs, mice, lizards, birds—even other bats.

A few bug-eating, unreleasable Northern California bats will



Photo JoEllen Arnold

accompany JoEllen Arnold and be available for meet and greet.

JoEllen Arnold met her first bat face to face in 1997 at a workshop in Yosemite and has since become a "Missionary for Bats." A former teacher, she has studied bat conservation, and traveled widely to meet more species and to assist in bat research. She volunteers with NorCal Bats to provide public education and helps with rescue and rehabilitation of local bats. Her mission is to open people's hearts and minds to these beneficial creatures, which are in grave peril in many parts of the world, including the United States.

For more information, see www.norcalbats.org.



Photo James Brantley

7 pm: Marin Sanctuary

This year marks the 60th anniversary of Richardson Bay Audubon Center and Sanctuary in Marin. We will share a video celebrating its history and programs, along with a video highlighting diversity in the entire Audubon network.

Next Meeting: OCTOBER 4

The Mt. Diablo Audubon Society will meet **Thursday, Oct. 4**, in the Camellia Room of The Gardens at Heather Farm in Walnut Creek.

6:30 pm Doors open

7:00 pm Birding Info

7:25 pm News

7:40 pm Sweets & Raffle

8:00 pm Main Program

"Why Should I Care about Bats?"

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Plus: New Educational Display in Heather Farm Park

Small Moments With Big Impact

When it comes to sharing information about birds, sometimes we may not realize the influence that we have on others, especially children. A case in point:



**PRESIDENT'S
CORNER**

In 2012, our daughter and son-in-law and their three daughters made a trip to Florida. While there, one of their activities included an airboat tour of a swamp. Before the boat departed, the guide showed everyone a binder that was filled with laminated photographs of animals that they might see. As he flipped through the pages, he showed photos of mammals,

reptiles and, lastly, a selection of birds. As he methodically flipped through those pages, he asked the participants to identify the birds. One bird really stumped the entire group, but Megan, our 12-year-old granddaughter, quickly recognized it as a Roseate Spoonbill. The guide was astonished! As it turned out, she was the only person on any of his trips who had accurately identified that bird. He asked her how in the world she knew that was a Roseate Spoonbill. After all, it is not a bird seen in California. She responded that she knew the name of the bird because she often played the game "Bird Bingo" with her grandparents!

When our granddaughters were young, "Bird Bingo," was one of their favorite games to play with Nancy and me. I was extremely delighted and gratified to learn that she had been listening and watching so intently during our game-time with her that she was able to recall the name of an improbable bird like the Roseate Spoonbill. Oftentimes it seems, you just may not realize the impact of your shared time with others when it comes to birds. As is often the case, children are some of our best audiences.

"Bird Bingo" is widely available in many nature stores.—*Paul Schorr*



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The MDAS Board meets at 6:45 pm at Wild Birds Unlimited in Pleasant Hill on the second Thursday of every month except July and August.

The Quail is published monthly except in January, July and August by the Mt. Diablo Audubon Society, PO Box 53, Walnut Creek, CA 94597-0053.

www.diabloaudubon.org

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Mark your calendars: This year's Central County Bird Count will take place Sat., Dec. 15. The East County Count will follow on Wed., Dec. 19. Previous participants, **let me know** if you plan to come out again this year. Contact me at eleite@diabloaudubon.org. If you are new to Mt. Diablo Audubon Society and interested in participating, start by checking out National Audubon's Christmas Bird Count site: www.audubon.org/conservation/science/christmas-bird-count. Look for more details next month.
—CBC Chair Elizabeth Leite



You are invited to join Audubon California Nov. 2–4 in Long Beach for the 2018 Audubon Assembly. The program will offer coastal birding, interactive presentations and sessions on topics from advocacy, fundraising and communications to conservation and coalition building. To register, reserve lodging, and see the agenda, visit California Audubon at ca.audubon.org/about/chapters/audubon-california-assembly. For answers to questions, email chapternetworkca@audubon.org. Hope to see you in Long Beach! —
Legislative Action Chair Ariana Rickard

Former MDAS Pres. Jimm Edgar has moved. To reach him, write

**406 Valley Street
Fairhope, AL 36532**

A Guide to Podcasts

For those who haven't listened to a "podcast" before, the term itself can be a bit daunting. Fortunately, neither an iPod nor tuning into a broadcast is required. All that's needed is an internet connection and a device that can play the MP3 format that these recordings use—most cell phones and all computers can.

While podcasts can be downloaded as apps, the podcasts listed below can also be accessed through any web browser (Safari, Firefox, and Chrome, for example), and in most cases can be saved to the phone or computer for later offline listening, thus saving data plan charges on the road.



As the Rockin' Robin chorus belts out its "tweedie-deedie-dee"s, it's time for another episode of **Talkin' Birds**, an independent radio production from the Northeast. Now at nearly 700 shows, this 30-minute delight features Ray Brown and his guests discussing a wide range of topics of interest to most anyone who would be reading this column, and he even includes a call-in "Mystery Bird" feature for folks who are streaming the show or listening through a live radio broadcast.

Even listening later, it's fun to try to identify the bird being featured. As the show is coming from the East Coast, it extends our West Coast sensibilities to learn what songs/behaviors/descriptions we might recognize when the precise species is not found west of the Rockies. Also, the show's deep conservation commitment is applicable across the continent.

Directly produced by *Birdwatcher's Digest*, **Out There With The Birds** features Editor and Co-publisher Bill Thompson III, along with Ben Lizdas, advertising sales director for *BWD* and its companion publication *Watching Backyard Birds*, both headquartered in Ohio. Not as tightly focused on birds as *Talkin' Birds*, OTWTB has offered 40 episodes, 25 minutes apiece, including deep, timely discussions of a great variety of bird science, trivia, and appreciation. A second podcast from the magazine, **This Birding Life**, features personal observations of the joys and travails of worldwide birding.

A one-woman-show, Laura Erickson's **For The Birds** has been on-air since 1986, with every 3-5 minute spot now available from her website. Based in Minnesota, she deals with weather and warblers we Westerners only imagine, but she is always interesting and of far wider relevance than just her local patch. The bio on her website describes enough expertise and experience for a dozen people.—MDAS Webmaster Dal Leite

<http://www.talkinbirds.com/archive/>

<https://www.birdwatchersdigest.com/bwdsite/podcasts.php>

<https://www.lauraerickson.com/radio/>

For complete directions for accessing **Talkin' Birds**, **Out There With The Birds**, and **For The Birds**, and useful apps for listening at home or on the go, visit www.diabloaudubon.org/bird-wide-web.php on computer or mobile.

Upcoming Field Trips



2 Saturday, Oct. 6

Outer Point Reyes

Leader: Juan-Carlos Solis (925) 222-8573

We are hoping for migrants and vagrants. Weather is unpredictable. Bring lunch and liquids. Carpool leaves Sun Valley Mall lot at 7 am. Meet 8:30 am at Bear Valley Visitor Center in Olema. From I-80 in Vallejo, follow Hwy 37 19.1 miles to Atherton Ave, exit and turn L, cross US 101 to San Marin Dr and continue about 3 miles. Turn R on Novato Blvd for 6 miles to stop sign, then L on Pt Reyes-Petaluma Rd for 7 miles to another stop sign. Turn R across the bridge, go 3 miles to Hwy 1. Turn L into Pt Reyes Station. After a stop at the Bovine Bakery for coffee and pastries, continue out of town towards Olema, then R onto Bear Valley Rd. Visitor Center is off Bear Valley.

2 Saturday, Oct. 13

Hawk Hill

Leader: Fred Safier (925) 937-2906

We will bird the lagoons before going to the hawk watch site. At noon, the staff talks about their work and usually demonstrates banding. Carry lunch and liquids. The walk up the hill is only a few hundred yards, but steep. Carpool leaves El Nido Ranch Rd at 8 am. Meet in parking lot by upper Rodeo Lagoon at 9 am. From S US 101 take Alexander Ave, just before the Golden Gate Bridge. On west side of freeway, turn left toward Marin Headlands and go up the hill (Conzelman Rd); at the traffic circle go R and down hill (McCullough Rd). Turn L onto Bunker Rd and continue to the parking lot on the R just before the bridge.

2 Wednesday, Oct. 24

Berkeley-Emeryville Shoreline

Leader: Teri Wills (925) 408-5364

Shorebirds and possibly loons, grebes and bay ducks. May be cold and windy; dress in layers. Up to 2 miles flat walking along the bay. Second stop at high tide roosts near Emeryville Marina. Carry lunch and liquids. Carpool leaves at 8 am from El Nido Ranch Rd. Meet at 8:30 am in the parking lot behind the Seabreeze Market at University Ave and W Frontage Rd in Berkeley. Take Hwy 24 to I-580W, then I-80N. Take Powell St exit, L on Powell, R on W Frontage Rd.

3 Saturday, Oct. 27

Abbott's Lagoon

Leaders: Kent Fickett (415) 269-4277
and Bill Chilson (510) 619-6692

Carry lunch and liquids. Lots of walking in sand. Carpool leaves Sun Valley Mall at 7 am. Meet at 8:30 am at Bear Valley Visitor Center, Pt Reyes Nat'l Seashore. See directions for Oct. 6 trip to Outer Point Reyes; they are the same.

Field trips are open to members and nonmembers, beginners to advanced birders, but no dogs. MDAS encourages carpooling (riders help with gas, tolls or fees). **Drivers who carpool for field trips should have proof of liability insurance in their cars.**

- 1**: Easy. Little walking, smooth paths
- 2**: Moderate. One mile+, possibly rougher terrain
- 3**: Difficult. Many miles, rough terrain

Carpool Meeting Spots

•**El Nido Ranch Rd:** Exit Hwy 24 at St. Stephens Dr. east of Orinda. El Nido Ranch Rd runs parallel and north of 24. Park just E of St. Stephens.
•**Sun Valley Mall:** SW corner of mall lot at Willow Pass Rd and Contra Costa Blvd in Concord.

Heather Farm Kiosk Teaches about Birds

About a year ago, passing the informational kiosk on the east side of the natural lake in Heather Farm Park for the umpteenth time, I noted the drooping, faded photos inside. It dawned on me that this would be the perfect spot for some eye-catching information about local birds—and the perfect opportunity for the Mt. Diablo Audubon Society chapter to educate the public about this important urban oasis and the birds who inhabit it. If we could also add important conservation information and promote MDAS chapter meetings and activities, all the better.

I shared my idea with Rosalie Howarth, who walks the park daily, and she gamely agreed to help. We set up an appointment with Walnut Creek Open Space Supervisor Nancy Dollard, who enthusiastically supported our notion and gave us the green light to proceed. With MDAS Board approval, a plan was set in motion to transform that prime piece of informational real estate into a bird-friendly display.

The hard part was paring down the giant list of birds seen at Heather Farm to a manageable, frequently seen, public-friendly list. While a lowly, non-native House Sparrow may not be considered the most thrilling of birds to serious birders, Jane Q. Public might be grateful for that information, take a deeper interest in local birds and even want to help protect this special habitat and its inhabitants.

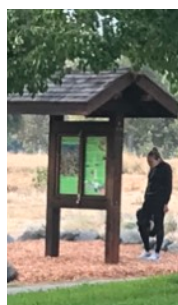
Poring over eBird and Audubon checklists and getting input from regular Heather Farm birders, we came up with a list of 40 birds to highlight. Rosalie did the heavy lifting, researching each bird and crafting short descriptions. I created an accompanying brochure that the public could use as a guide, with brief facts and color photos supplied by our members. (The brochure is also available on the MDAS website).

Then, we wisely enlisted the talents of MDAS member Michele Sheehan who has designed displays for the Walnut Creek Library, a skill she let slip during a pickle ball game. It was great intel; Michele took our fledgling ideas and gave them wings.

The end result is an engaging, colorful, professional looking display titled “What’s That Bird?” It focuses on 40 common birds the public might see on a stroll around the lake and highlights birds of special interest with detailed facts and photos. Michele was able to add information about conservation issues, too, such as reasons not to feed

bread to the ducks, the hazards of improperly disposed fishing line, and the dire consequences of rodenticides in the food chain, especially for raptors.

As with any project, it truly takes a village. Since the kiosk had not been utilized recently, it needed a makeover. Nancy Dollard’s crew got rid of the cobwebs and stained the weathered boards, while the Rotary chapter that had initially created the kiosk agreed to install new plastic windows to keep the display protected from the elements. Jesse Smyers led the Rotary team, while Mike Vickers, who manages Walnut Creek’s park maintenance and open spaces, was instrumental in making sure that the nearby lawn sprinklers were pared back to prevent water damage to the kiosk. He even provided tan bark and a rock border to finish off the space. Further improvements are in the



works; MDAS member Susana de Trapaga has kindly offered to create wooden holders to replace the plastic ones currently housing the brochures. Within days, park visitors found the display and began using the brochures. The end result fulfills our MDAS mission statement: Mt. Diablo Audubon Society, a Chapter of National Audubon,

is committed to the sustainable balance of our community’s people, birds, other wildlife, and habitat through conservation, education, and advocacy. That feels good.

Head on over and take a look for yourself!
—Education Committee Chair Maren Smith

Clockwise from top: Maren Smith and Rosalie Howarth show off the new birding kiosk at Heather Farm. Jesse Smyers stands by the plastic windows his Rotary Club team installed. A passerby studies the display. Susana de Trapaga holds a wooden box she has built to hold brochures. (Photos Maren Smith with passerby photo by Rosalie Howarth)



Bodega Bay, Aug. 18: All 17 of us agreed that even a bad day at Bodega Bay is still a good day. *(photo Cassie Tzur)* Diversity was definitely down, the tide was unfavorable, and our 45 species was, I believe, an all-time low for this trip. However, we had lovely, mild weather, and there were still plenty of birds. We saw Pied-billed and Western Grebes, Black Oystercatcher *(photo Cassie Tzur)*, Black Turnstone, Pigeon Guillemot, Red-throated and Common Loons, all the possible Cormorants



Barn Owl at Campbell Cove, and at the very end, just outside Doran Beach Park, several Red-necked Phalaropes *(photo Beth Branthaver)*, two of them very close and tame, one with even a bit of red on its neck.—*Fred Safier, Leader*



and Pelicans, four species of Heron, and Belted Kingfishers. But the highlight birds were a brilliant Townsend's Warbler at Owl Canyon, a

Jewel Lake, Sept. 6: Eleven birders participated in a foggy morning bird walk down Wildcat Canyon, around Jewel Lake, and across the Upper Pack Rat Trail. The best part of the walk was seeing two warbler groups gleaning in the oaks. Migration is definitely here. Yellow, Wilson's, Black-throated Gray, Townsend's, and Orange-crowned Warblers were accompanied by Hutton's and Warbling Vireos. A probable Virginia Rail went into the reeds at Jewel Lake, watched by the resident Kingfisher and Black Phoebe. Acorn Woodpecker (which is rare at Tilden) was present, as well

as Hairy, Downy, and Nuttall's Woodpeckers. Swainson's and Hermit Thrushes were present during their overlap period before the Swainson's depart to the South. We counted 36 species.—*Maury Stern, Leader*



Antioch Dunes, Sept. 8: The normal second Saturday of the month docent tour of the Dunes was enjoyed by

15-20 members of the public, six of whom were MDAS members. We learned a lot of history, natural as well as local. Not many birds were seen, but we did have an American Kestrel during our introduction to the Dunes, and later we had an adult Peregrine Falcon fly quite low right over us. We saw lots of post-blooming Antioch Dunes Evening Primrose, an endangered plant species, but did not see Contra Costa Wallflowers or Lange's Metalmark Butterflies, the other two endangered species in the refuge. We saw or heard 9 bird species.—*Hugh Harvey, Leader*

45 *Field Trips*
Completed Last Year

654
Participants

260
Species Identified



Want to save trees? Get your *Quail* by email. Contact Virginia Hamrick vhamrick8@gmail.com.

Q Which hummingbird breeds farthest north?

FSMNIROHMDUUUIBRG

Unscramble the letters or see page 10 for the answer.

WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS

- | | |
|-------------------|--------------|
| Trisha Brown | Clayton |
| Linda Cristostomo | Crockett |
| Muriel Dulieu | Orinda |
| Wendy Erdos | Hayward |
| Marianne McCraney | Walnut Creek |

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Wild Birds Hosts Nature Event

This is Wild Birds Unlimited's 27th year sponsoring a Nature Event, giving you the chance to meet and learn about organizations working to protect our local wildlife and environment. This will be a family event even the kids will love, with a live bald eagle, birds, bugs, snakes, and spiders. Nature artists and authors will show their creations. Everything happens from 10 am to 4 pm Sat., Oct. 6 at WBU in Pleasant Hill.



Wild Birds

Groups will show you how to help protect our wildlife and find the best places to view the flora and fauna of our beautiful East Bay. Everyone can learn something at this fun event.

While you are here, visit with Gary Bogue, one of our most treasured naturalists, and Joan Morris, who writes the pets and wildlife column for the Bay Area News Group. Meet illustrator Chuck Todd, children's author Merci Martin, naturalist Mike Marchiano and nature photographers Greg and Laurie Wilson.



Paul Schorr and Brian Murphy represent MDAS at a previous year's Nature Event.

Mt. Diablo Audubon will be represented, along with such groups as International Bird Rescue, River Otter Ecology, Contra Costa Avian Society, Native Bird Connections, Lindsay Wildlife Experience, Wild Futures, TH Apiaries, Pleasant Hill Instructional Gardens, Mount Diablo Interpretive Association, Save Mount Diablo, and several more.

It is WBU's goal to help the public learn more about our natural resources, birds, and wildlife: how to enjoy them, and how to preserve them for future generations. Hope to see you here.—*Member-at-Large Mike Eliot*



Columnist Joan Morris, illustrator Chuck Todd and naturalist Gary Bogue await Nature Event visitors at Wild Birds Unlimited. (Photos Mike Eliot)

Open Space Win in Antioch

Fans of open space enjoyed a victory Aug. 28 when the Antioch City Council adopted a new initiative called "Let Antioch Voters Decide: The Sand Creek Area Protection Initiative." Now more than 1,400 acres of beautiful land, creek and wildlife habitat west of Deer Valley Rd have a robust layer of protection.

This new initiative follows the council's approval earlier this summer of Richland Developers' 1,177-unit "The Ranch" housing project. The "Let Antioch Voters Decide" initiative will not stop "The Ranch" project from moving forward, but will allow voters control over future development. Any project proposing something more than one housing unit per 80 acres will need to be approved by the Antioch voters.

Many decision makers, residents and key campaign supporters, including Save Mount Diablo, Greenbelt Alliance, California Native Plant Society, and Sierra Club, view the new initiative as a good compromise between balanced development and conservation of the most important areas west of Deer Valley Rd, including the outer hills, woodland, creek and the areas of highest biodiversity.

For more information, contact Antioch Community to Save Sand Creek at info@letantiochvotersdecide.org.
—*President Paul Schorr*

Fall Classes

Raptor Identification by Pamela Llewellyn

Two 2-hour classes and two 4-hour trips

Classes: Tues., Oct. 2 and 9, 7-9 pm

Field Trips: Sun., Oct. 7 and 14, 8 am-noon

Lafayette Library and Learning Center, Oak Room

JUST 4 SPOTS LEFT!

Cost: \$45 MDAS member/\$50 non-member

Birding By Ear by Denise Wight

Two 2-hour classes and two 4-hour field trips

Classes: Thurs., Nov. 8 and 15, 7-9 pm

Field Trips: Sat., Nov. 10 and 17, 8:30 am-12:30 pm

Lafayette Library and Learning Center, Oak Room

Cost: \$45 MDAS member/\$50 non-member

To Register: diabloaudubon.org/education.php

Join FeederWatch

This past July I had the joy of observing a Western Bluebird family in my front yard for about a week. I was thrilled. Because I have been a participant in FeederWatch—the Cornell University citizen science project—for over 10 years, I knew that Western Bluebirds rarely come to my yard.

Yet the signs were unmistakable. From my kitchen, I saw awkward, oddly feathered birds. Huge eye-rings. Gangly and fluttery. Three fledglings landed on the back of a garden bench, their parents at a seed feeder, rushing to fill the gaped beaks. Wow! Western Bluebirds! It's this kind of surprise that makes FeederWatch so rewarding.

FeederWatch is a flexible commitment. At minimum, it asks for about an hour observing for two consecutive days. For each observation cycle, you create an electronic report, which feeds automatically into the eBird database. These are useful to researchers studying topics as diverse as finch eye disease and the irruptive movements of Common Redpolls and Snowy Owls. FeederWatchers monitor birds in the United States and Canada.

Participation has taught me refined discrimination strategies. Early in my years with the program, I learned to decipher Purple Finches from House Finches. I even had a Cassin's Finch eating alongside the other two species. I became aware of interspecies dominance behaviors, a topic FeederWatch researchers are exploring. I've learned which species prefer suet year round, which will settle for safflower when the squirrels become too numerous, and how many feeders to add in December to dissuade the Yellow-rumped Warblers from chasing everyone else away. And I know that the Townsend's Warbler that returns annually prefers the feeder next to a bush where he can hide from the boisterous finches.

Consider joining FeederWatch this year. You'll probably get hooked. This year's season begins very soon—Nov. 10. To receive your kit in time, now is the time to sign up at <http://feederwatch.org/>. —*Citizen Science Chair Elizabeth Leite*

Observations

(Aug. 1 to Sept. 7, 2018)

Migration continues, with many shorebirds coming in, and passerines beginning to move in during the last few weeks. The hot birds of the period were a county-first **Buff-breasted Sandpiper** with 2 or 3 **Baird's Sandpipers** at the Richmond Water Treatment Plant from 8/24 to 9/5. AM discovered them. The birds were seen by over 50 observers.—*Observations Editor Maury Stern*

A **Greater White-fronted Goose** at Heather Farm Pond 8/15 has been hanging with the Canada Geese for a while. CL

Blue-winged Teal was at Holland Tract 8/6. LK, DM, EM

HH saw 10 **Northern Shovelers** at Heather Farm Pond 8/21.

Thirty **Common Mergansers** were on Briones Reservoir 8/12. LW

A **Black-chinned Hummingbird** was at the Discovery Bay Golf Course 8/6. LK, DM, EM

An **Allen's Hummingbird** was seen by WH and NBS 8/1 at the Tilden Botanic Garden.

LK, DM, and EM saw a single **Whimbrel** 8/6 at Clifton Court Forebay.

On 8/6, LK, DM, and EM saw 585 **Long-billed Dowitchers** at the Waterbird Way Pond in Martinez.

Six **Spotted Sandpipers** were at Pt San Pablo 8/6. LK, EM

C&TW saw a **Wandering Tattler** near the Old Pier at Meeker Slough 9/6.

Three **Lesser Yellowlegs** were at Waterway Pond 8/6. LK, DM, EM

Least Terns have been at the Pt Isabel Meeker Slough area since 8/27 TS. AK saw them 9/5, and C&TW and JT 9/6.

Thirty-two **Caspian Terns** were at Piper Slough 8/6. LK, EM, DM

DM and EM saw 925 **Brown Pelicans** on Brooks Island 8/6.

A **Bald Eagle** flew over Discovery Bay Golf Course 8/6. LK, EM, DM

FS saw a **Golden Eagle** flyover near Heather Farm 9/7.

There was a **Willow Flycatcher** at Heather Farm Pond 9/7. HH

Bank Swallows were in small numbers at Holland Tract 8/6, LK, EM, DM; and Bethel Island 8/22. AL

Ruby-crowned Kinglets started returning 8/23 to Valle Vista Staging Area. DL, MK, RN. SJ saw them 9/5 at Sibley Regional Volcanic Park.

On 9/4, AL saw a **Hermit Thrush** at Ellis Lake Park in Concord.

A single **Cedar Waxwing** was also at Valle Vista Staging Area 8/23. DL, MK, JD, RN

PS saw a **MacGillivray's Warbler** at Contra Loma Park 8/27.

AH spotted an **American Redstart** at Creekside Park in El Cerrito 8/25, along with EM and KS.

There were 9 **Yellow Warblers** at Pt San Pablo 8/6. LK, EM Many have been seen in Contra Costa County since then.

AK saw a **Yellow-rumped Warbler** 8/29 at Wildcat Canyon Regional Park.

Black-throated Gray Warblers have been seen many times: 8/5 MKi Inspiration Point; LK and EM

(4) at Pt. San Pablo 8/6; HH, FS, and TF at Heather Farm natural pond.

Townsend's Warblers were in many places also: Inspiration Pt 8/5 MKi; Wildcat Canyon 9/7 AK; and Jewel Lake 8/11. C&TW

Hermit Warblers were in small numbers: Inspiration Pt 8/5 MKi; Vollmer Peak 8/18 LF; and Wildcat Canyon 9/7. AK

On 8/6 LK and EM saw a **Western Tanager** at Pt San Pablo. FS saw one near Heather Farm 9/7.

A **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** was discovered by RR 9/4 at Pt Pinole Regional Park and seen by JH as well.

LK and EM had a **Black-headed Grosbeak** at Pt San Pablo 8/6.

Four **Yellow-headed Blackbirds** were at Holland Tract 8/6. LK, DM, EM. On 8/22, AL saw one with a large blackbird flock at Bethel Island.

To submit sightings, write Maury at mbstern2@yahoo.com or call (925) 284-5980.

NBS Nancy Benson-Smith, JD Judith Dunham, TF Tracy Farrington, LF Lee Friedman, HH Hugh Harvey, AH Adrian Hinkle, JH Jeff Hoppes, WH Wen Hsu, SJ Sharon J. (no last name given), LK Logan Kahle, MKi Marilyn Kinch, AK Alan Krakauer, MK Mary Krentz, DL Don Lewis, AL Albert Linkowski, CL Carol Livingston, AM Aaron Maizlish, EM Ethan Monk, DM Dominik Mosur, RN Rich Nicolson, RR Robert Raffel, FS Fred Safier, PS Paul Schorr, TS Tim Sunderson, KS Kirk Swenson, JT John Toldi, LW L. Weiss, C&TW Chris and Teri Wills

Art by Megan Sandri



Q: Which hummingbird breeds farthest north?

A: Rufous Hummingbird

This spring, I had an opportunity to spend a week photographing hummingbirds in British Columbia. There were three different species nesting on a ranch where we were staying, and one of the species was the Rufous Hummingbird (*Selasphorus rufus*). The males were especially feisty, and we ended up calling them the Red Barons since they attacked any other hummer coming near "their" feeder.

Males make a courtship display involving a steep oval or J-shaped dive, with whining and popping sounds at the bottom of the dive. I saw a male do his courtship dance for a female perched on a branch quite low to the ground. While she sat, the male flew back and forth in front of her, making a buzzing sound. It was fascinating. I am not sure if that female was impressed enough to mate with him. If she did, her work began, since it is all up to the female to build the nest, lay eggs and rear the young. She builds a nest in a tree or bush from 3 to 30 feet above ground. Up to 20 nests can be placed within a few yards of one another.

The nest is built of soft plant materials and held together by spider webs. The female will decorate the outside with moss, lichen or bark to help camouflage it. She incubates the small white eggs (usually two) for 15-17 days. She feeds the nestlings by sticking her bill deep into their beaks and regurgitating tiny insects, sometimes mixed with nectar. The young are around 21 days old when they take their first flight.

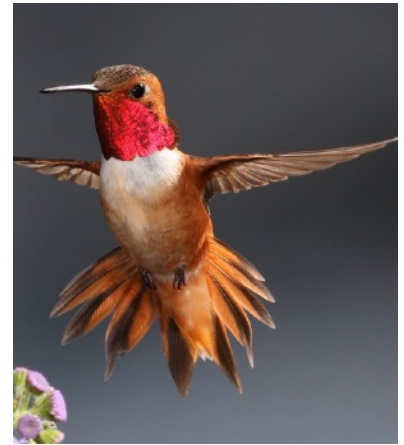
After breeding, the males head south. Since they breed in southern Alaska, British Columbia and the Pacific Northwest, they must increase their weight by 60 percent in preparation for flight. They make a clockwise circuit of western North America each year, heading down through the Rocky Mountains to winter in Mexico, then back north in the spring along the West Coast to breed.

Rufous hummers are amazing. They can beat their wings up to 62 wingbeats per second! They have an excellent memory for location, and can come into your yard every spring and know where your feeders are.

These birds are beautiful. The males have a rusty colored back and tail (although a number of them have some green on their back, making them hard to distinguish from Allen's Hummingbirds). The outer tail feathers are broad, and the fourth tail feather from the outside has a notched tip, which distinguishes them from the Allen's. (See photo by Jean Halford) The vivid iridescent orange-red throat on the male is the most stunning part of this bird, shifting from brown to iridescence in a flash! Females and immature are greenish above with rusty washed flanks, rusty patches on their green tail and often a spot of orange on their throat, and almost impossible to distinguish from the female Allen's.

No one knows why Rufous Hummingbirds have suffered a serious decline—62 percent from 1966 to 2014.

Most birds in this species live 3 to 5 years. However, the oldest rufous was close to 9 years old when it was caught and released in British Columbia during banding operations.—Jean Halford



COMMUNITY CALENDAR

NOW THROUGH 10/15

9 AM-12 PM

**AUBURN AREA VULTURE
MIGRATION AND RAPTOR
COUNT**

**ANNUALAUBURNAREATURKEYVULTURE
MIGRATION.WORDPRESS.COM/**

SAT., 10/6

7:30 AM START

**BIRD WALK
LOS VAQUEROS RESERVOIR
WWW.EASTBAYNATURE.COM**

SAT., 10/6

10 AM-4 PM

**NATURE EVENT
WILD BIRDS UNLIMITED
SEE PAGE 7
PLEASANTHILL.WBU.COM**

Annual Treasurer's Report

Mt. Diablo Audubon Society remains in an excellent position to serve our community. We had another successful year. The annual year-end fundraising drive continues to be strong, and our total chapter membership is strong, too.

The financial health of MDAS, due to the generosity of our members, allows us to actively pursue our mission. During the year, we funded important habitat preservation projects and continued our community education outreach efforts for young people such as the “No Child Left Inside” program. Your generosity supports our monthly presentation program, this newsletter, the annual Christmas Bird Count, our website, and much more. You have read about these important community efforts in this and prior issues of *The Quail*. Each dollar you give is put to good use for the benefit of our community.

The General Fund balance covers operations and reserves, and the *Breeding Bird Atlas* balance reflects the books held for sale and the results of book sales. During the past fiscal year, all conservation and education activities were funded through the General Fund.

Fund balances are held in checking, money market, and certificate of deposit accounts.—*Treasurer Steve Buffi*

MT. DIABLO AUDUBON SOCIETY

July 2017 – June 2018

FUNDS	REVENUE	EXPENSES	NET	BALANCE 7/1/18
General	\$31,748.11	\$34,456.69	-\$2,708.58	\$128,132.57
Conservation & Education	\$25.27	\$0.00	\$25.27	\$16,658.99
<i>Breeding Bird Atlas</i>	-\$40.96	\$102.62	-\$143.58	\$18,051.91
Total All Funds	\$31,732.42	\$34,559.31	-\$2,826.89	\$162,843.47

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

SAT., 10/13

1:30-2:30 PM
**PEREGRINES ON THE
 CAMPANILE**
 OPEN TO THE PUBLIC BUT
 REQUIRES A \$25 WEEKEND
 CLASS PASS
[HOME.COMING.BERKELEY.EDU/](http://homecoming.berkeley.edu/)

SUN., 10/14

9 AM-12 PM
**DISCOVER DIABLO
 SHELL RIDGE HIKE**
[WWW.SAVEMOUNTDIABLO.ORG](http://www.savemountdiablo.org)

SUN., 10/21

8-9:30 AM
**BIRDING THE FARM
 ARDENWOOD HISTORIC FARM**
[WWW.EBPARKS.ORG/CALS/](http://www.ebparks.org/cals/)

Mt. Diablo Audubon Society

P.O. Box 53
Walnut Creek, CA 94597-0053

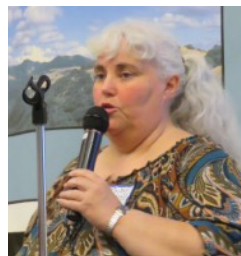
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*A Long-billed Curlew explores the Hayward Shoreline.
(Photo Isaac Aronow)*



Clockwise from Left: Paul Schorr thanked Maren Smith for three years of editing The Quail. Paul Schorr and Kent Fickett presented former President Jimm Edgar with an MDAS shirt and wished him well in his move to Alabama. Brian Murphy brought a gorgeous cake. Rich Cimino talked Birds of Belize, after Cindy Margulis described how Golden Gate Audubon's Osprey Cam engages the public at www.sfbayospreys.org. (Center photos Maren Smith, outside photos Lori Patel)